



Appleby Archaeology Newsletter



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Winter 2016



The next meeting will be the January AGM and Members' Evening. Details of the Members' talks and spring Lecture programme are posted at the back of this Newsletter. The Minutes for last year's meeting, the Agenda for this year and a Membership Renewal Form are attached. Please note that subscriptions are now £15 for a single person and £25 for joint membership.

On behalf of you all, we would like to express our appreciation to Alice Hook who kindly donated a surveying level to the Group in memory of her late husband, Stewart.

A very Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for 2017 to you all.

Medieval Landscapes

Dr Caron Newman, a Research Associate at Newcastle University gave a lecture about "Mapping the Medieval Landscape of Cumbria" to Appleby Archaeology Group on 13th October. Her research started in late 18th and 19th century at a time when Daniel Defoe described mountainous Westmorland as :

the wildest, most barren and frightful of any that he had passed over in England, or even Wales itself; the west side, which borders on Cumberland, is indeed bounded by a chain of almost unpassable mountains which, in the language of the country, are called fells".

However by using contemporary County and more local Enclosure and Estate maps, she was able create a digital record of cultivation and settlement patterns across Cumbria. This suggested the landscape of Defoe's time was not as uncivilized and "frightful" as he claimed with perhaps a half unenclosed compared with one third today.

Dr Newman went on to explain how she had projected her survey back in time using even earlier documents including maps of the Cumbrian "Forests" (of which there were no less than 27, the largest being the Royal Forest of Inglewood), monastic holdings, place-names and site visits, to infer patterns of land use



during the Medieval period. At that time, estates would have been a mix of dispersed settlement and enclosures with small common arable fields, sheep and cattle 'ranches' (vaccaries) and industrial areas used for coppicing, mining and smelting together with wooded deer parks.



Farming in Medieval times

She finished by concluding the medieval landscape was probably dominated by unenclosed land, most of which was common waste, with large areas made up

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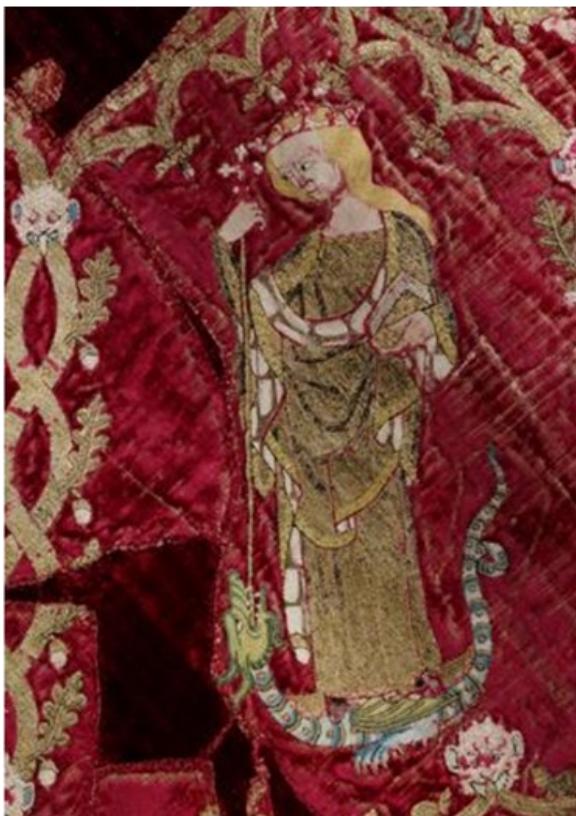
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of low moorland, mosses and poor soils like the Lazonby Ridge between the Lake District and the Pennines, and Anthorn Moss and Wedholme Flow on the Solway Plain. Although it was certainly an emptier and more varied landscape than at present, it was probably not one that we would have considered as "frightful". Recent work by Dr Newman and her colleagues in the Bewcastle area demonstrated that in areas where documentary evidence is slight, archaeological techniques may reveal a large amount of information about ancient field boundaries and settlement sites. "Mapping the medieval landscape" is thus very much "a work in progress".

Dr Newman was thanked for her informative and extremely well-illustrated talk.

Medieval Embroidery

The exhibition "Opus Anglicanum" at the V & A in London is a most stunning display of spectacular medieval embroideries and other related artifacts



The Butler Bowdon Cope (detail)
1330-1350. V&A London

... fine examples of huge embroidered religious vestments, pieces of medieval stained glass depicting ornamental motifs often incorporated into embroideries, psalters, brass rubbings of embroidered heraldic decoration, a range of needlework tools dating 1270 – 1400 (found in archaeology digs so justifying its inclusion here), a herbal and bestiary from some time after 1519, a jerkin which belonged to the Black Prince,



Seal bag , about 1280
Westminster Abby

and an early 16th century pall used for funerals and commemorative events for members of the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers. The highlight for me amongst this glittering display, was a caparison for a horse. It had clearly made to impress ... made for a medieval king incorporating some real "show-off" stitching in gold and silver thread on red velvet. Jaw-dropping! Fantastic – only on till February 2017.

Carol Dougherty

Vindolanda Frontiers in Transition

The Appleby Archaeology Group (and interested visitors) was treated to a lively, informative and very comprehensive talk by Marta Alberti, Senior Archaeologist with the Vindolanda Trust, on Thursday 10th November. The group had last heard about excavation work at Vindolanda in 2007. Marta brought them right up to date with events and research at the Roman fort carried out since that time – and it proved to be a fascinating account, describing the many discoveries made about the structure of the fort and objects found within it over the last nine years.



Dr Alberti began her talk by outlining how Vindolanda came to be where it is. There were plenty of natural resources close by which no doubt played a large role in choosing the site – water, limestone, clay, sandstone, lead and iron - in fact everything needed to create the camp and support both itself and the nearby civilian population. She also pointed out its proximity to Stanegate ('stone road'), an ancient route dating back to the Iron Age, which would have proved useful in supplying a camp at the edge of the Roman Empire.

Vindolanda was founded in 85AD by Belgian auxiliary soldiers and was inhabited in various forms until well after 410AD. On average, there was a change of garrison every 20 years and the Trust's current research – "Frontiers in Transition" – is seeking to discover how each garrison used and adapted the fort to evolving military requirements. Dr Alberti showed some photographs taken from the latest, most sophisticated type of drone. The clarity of the images was stunning. These revealed a complex arrangement of buildings, yards and passageways which were variously dated to the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries AD.

AD 70-80 FORT 0

Outpost fort built on Stanegate Road

AD 85 FORT I

First timber fort for 1st Cohort Tungarians

AD 95-100 FORT II

Timber fort upgraded

AD 100-105 FORT III

Batavian cohort replaces Tungarians

AD 105-120 FORT IV

1st Cohort Tungarians return

AD 120-130 FORT V

New fort built during construction of Wall

AD 140-160 FORT VI

Smaller auxillary fort replaces Fort V

AD 160-200 FORT VII

First stone fort built (North Africcan garrison?)

AD 200 – 212 FORT VIII

Old fort covered with native style circular huts

AD 211-212 First Abandonment

Fort and huts are dismantled

AD 213 FORT IX

Built over ruins of circular huts by 4th Cohort Gauls

AD 274-280 Second Abandonment

Town becomes derelict

AD 300-410 FORT X

Fort rebuilt, local community moved inside walls

AD 900 Third Abandonment.

Final occupants desert site and fort becomes a ruin

Astonishingly these images helped to identify eight 'buried' forts beneath the one visible on the surface today.

Second century buildings included a very large latrine site with twenty seats. Clearly a visit to the toilet was both a public and a communal affair in those days. In addition, there was evidence of a complex drainage system, mortared courtyards and workshop areas for metalworking. The building plan of the 3rd century fort posed an intriguing question. Several of the buildings were round - quite different to the straight walls and right-angle corners typical of Roman construction. Unfortunately very few objects were found, which might have provided a clue about their function. Their shape and location suggested that they may have been built and occupied by local Britons – perhaps working for the garrison in return for payment and protection, although this is not an entirely satisfactory explanation. Excavation of third and fourth century levels of construction revealed a large barracks floor, smaller cavalry barracks with very fine stone work, elaborate drainage systems and well-prepared surfaces. One surprising fact seems to be emerging from this work – there was apparently very little difference between life within and outside the walls. Numerous spindle whorls testify to the presence of a significant female population within the fort, comparable to that outside. Spinning was considered an important female accomplishment limited to women and not something in which any self respecting Roman soldier might indulge! The spindle whorls also point to a rather settled female presence, rather than transitory camp followers or prostitutes. Marta ended by showing pictures of some impressive recent finds – 421 leather shoes (male and female), skulls of animals, a very dainty spoon for make-up or medicine, wooden tablets, a sword handle, a pine barrel stave stamped with the name of the maker "Albinnor" and a good luck charm with phallic symbol.

Excavation of the Vindolanda site is continuing between April and September next year, when volunteers are welcome to join. Many Appleby Archaeology Group members could be heard expressing an interest in participating after Marta's excellent talk.

Park Authority Archaeology Conference 2016

This year's annual Park Authority Archaeology Conference was a quieter affair than usual. For one thing the archaeologists have been heavily involved preparing the Park's bid for Unesco World Heritage status. The Unesco judges were expected to arrive in a few days, so it was perhaps not surprising that Eleanor Kingston and John Hodgson, our regular hosts, seemed a little distracted. A successful outcome will greatly enhance the status of the Lake District National Park and could lead to greater investment and increased visitor

visitor numbers. So fingers crossed

Staffing in the archaeology unit had been reduced too, with Holly Beavitt-Pike moving into the planning section. Despite this, Eleanor's account of projects completed seemed fuller than usual. One new venture has been preparing an archive of aerial photographs and lidar images covering the whole west coast region. Unfortunately this is not available on line but can apparently be viewed by visitors at the LDNPA's headquarters at Murley Moss in Kendal.

In the "amateur" section of the conference, the award for 'Star Presenter' must go to Jeremy Robinson, a member of the Lake District Archaeology Volunteer Network, who gave a very entertaining account of his group's researches into "Lake District Rifle Ranges". I was reminded of Apparch's own tour of the Warcop range and our introduction to "the most heavily-shelled Iron Age farm enclosure in Europe". Jeremy was able to link the development of these ranges to the mid 19th century, when volunteer forces required space to practice their skills. Field archaeology, mapping out the distribution of spent bullets and cartridge cases recovered by metal detecting, provided constraining dates and usage patterns sufficient to support a convincing and fascinating story.

The Conference is always a stimulating and enjoyable event, providing an excellent showcase for the LDNPA's work. Attendance is recommended.

Martin Joyce

Newsletter Archive

You might be interested to learn that the Apparch website now contains an archive of old newsletters. Even better, it's now possible to search this on keywords.

To access the old newsletters, just click the "archive" tab on the website and follow the instructions. The very earliest newsletters (pre 2007) are just scanned facsimiles and are not quite so easy to read as the most recent versions. But they're still perfectly legible and give an interesting insight into the Group's early years.

The search facility comes courtesy of Google and, since we're not subscribing to the professional version of the facility (far too expensive), adverts are displayed alongside the search returns. But I don't feel these are too intrusive and they are easily ignored. Please note that the early scanned newsletters aren't addressed by the search.

We'll continue to circulate new newsletters as at present, but copies will also be added to the archive once their currency has worn off.

I hope you'll find the new facility useful. Personally I found some of the early newsletters particularly interesting.

Martin Joyce

Winter Lectures

Excavation of the Roman cemetery on Botchergate, Carlisle

Dr. Richard Newman (WA Archaeology)

Thursday 8th December

Botchergate forms the main thoroughfare into Carlisle from the south, and significant archaeological evidence has highlighted that the route served the same function during the Roman period. Excavations by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology in the William Street Carpark on Botchergate have revealed a well-preserved Roman cremation cemetery containing some of the best-preserved finds from the North of England.

AGM and Members Evening

Thursday 12th January

Carol Dougherty Progress of research related events of Dig Appleby

Chris Wilson Discovering the township boundary of Appleby-in-Westmorland

Martin Railton Dig Appleby fieldwork progress report

The prehistoric origins of the A1(M)

Blaise Vyner

Thursday 9th February

A prehistoric A1 route in North Yorkshire: the field evidence The south-north route of the A1 has been important, at least intermittently, from Roman times. However, it is possible to identify the landscape evidence for a route of much greater antiquity, the origins of which may lie in the Neolithic

Excavation, conservation and analysis of a Viking Cemetery at Cumwhitton

Adam Parsons (Oxford Arch North)

Thursday 9th March

In 2007 a Viking oval brooch was found in a field near the small village of Cumwhitton in Northern Cumbria. This led to the discovery of a small Viking age cemetery of pagan graves containing grave goods, the first of its kind in England excavated using modern archaeological techniques

Cumwhitton Cemetery

Reconstruction and interpretation of the objects, burials and environment

Adam Parsons (Oxford Arch North)

Thursday 13th April

Find out more about the reconstruction of the amazing objects the individuals of Cumwhitton were buried with, what this might say about their origins, how they were buried and the region where they were buried in the Viking age